

consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs

Nutrition education hearings set

Because it is concerned that many consumers are not getting the kind of information they need on the relation of food to diet and health, the House Subcommittee on Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations and Nutrition is holding a series of hearings on how these consumers can become better informed. Consumers' need to know more about food and nutrition was emphasized by last year's report of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs—*Dietary Goals for the US*. Among other things, the report asserted that Americans eat too much sugar, fat, meat and salt and not enough poultry, fish and complex carbohydrates (provided mainly by grain products and some vegetables).

The next hearing—which is open to the public—will be held Jan. 31 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 1301 of the Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, DC and will discuss the role of the food industry in nutrition education. A later hearing on the role of the advertising industry in nutrition education has been tentatively scheduled for mid-February. CONSUMER NEWS will report other hearings as they are scheduled.

Informacion para el Consumidor

In addition to its quarterly listing of Federal consumer publications (*Consumer Information Catalog*), General Services Administration's (GSA) Consumer Information Center each year publishes a slightly different listing in Spanish for community leaders and educators who work with Spanish-speaking consumers. The new edition of *Informacion para el Consumidor* lists 100 publications in Spanish on consumer topics ranging from housing and cars to nutrition and naturalization requirements. Other topics explain the differences between Medicaid and Medicare; tell you what to do if you have been denied credit because of sex, marital status, race, color, religion, national origin or age; and describe common medical fraud situations.

Most of the publications described in the *Catalog* are free; to receive your free copy of the Spanish language *Catalog* write to Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009. Bulk quantities are also available from Pueblo.

Vol. 8, No. 2, Jan. 15, 1978

Amtrak-Kellogg promotion scored

Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) expressed its "deep disappointment" in a letter to National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) President Paul H. Reistrup over Amtrak's cooperation with the Kellogg Company in a promotional campaign involving Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Raisin Bran and Frosted Flakes. The promotion offers half-fare rides to children traveling with a full-fare paying adult if the child submits 3 box tops and a coupon from one of the 3 cereals.

The OCA letter, signed by OCA Director-Designate Lee Richardson, specifically objected to a Federal entity involving itself in promoting the sale of Frosted Flakes, which contains 39% sugar by weight. Citing condemnation of such products by dental health experts, nutritionists, and the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition, and noting Health, Education and Welfare Dept. Secretary Joseph Califano's health goal of "reduction of dental caries (cavities) by reducing sugar intake," the OCA letter termed it "deplorable that while those in the Executive and Legislative branches of government are recommending curtailing sugar consumption, Amtrak has lent its name to the promotion of a pre-sweetened cereal."

Copies of the OCA letter are available from Office of Consumer Affairs, 621 Reporters Bldg., Washington, DC 20201.

No smoking

In his Jan. 11 address before the National Interagency Council on Smoking and Health in Washington, DC, Health, Education and Welfare Dept. Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr. announced that "we will explore ways of giving people more powerful incentives, financial and otherwise, to protect their health by not smoking." He further announced that he and Treasury Dept. Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal were forming an interdepartmental task force to examine tax policies relating to cigarette use since the existing Federal excise tax on cigarettes has remained unchanged at 8 cents (a pack) since 1951. "The question of whether tax policy can influence decisions about smoking," Califano said, "deserves careful study in the interest of the public health."

The task force will examine a range of possible measures including:

- A general increase in the Federal excise tax on cigarettes.
- A graduated tax according to nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide content, giving manufacturers incentives to market less hazardous brands, and giving smokers incentives to change to less hazardous brands.

Califano also asked health, fire, life and disability insurers "to consider offering special premium discounts and other advantages to non-smokers—so that non-smokers will no longer have to bear so heavy a part of the enormous costs generated by smokers."

More on "free" vacations

Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) and the Cleveland, OH Regional Office of the **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) are continuing to receive complaints concerning the allegedly fraudulent business practices of Columbia Research Corp. (previously known as Market Development Corp.), 3762 W. Devon Ave., Chicago, IL 60659.

FTC has sued Market Development Corp. for the alleged fraudulent business practices, but at CONSUMER NEWS presstime the case had not been tried. These practices include offering "free" vacation trips for 2 to such places as Las Vegas, NV and certain cities in Florida. All offers are made by mail to computer-selected consumers and ask for a \$15 deposit and other fees on the basis of a "100% Money Back Guarantee" and "refundable deposit." However, letters received by OCA and FTC indicate that Columbia Research refused to make any refund on the deposit or other fees when consumers decided not to take the free vacation.

Aggrieved consumers are also advised to contact their state attorneys general since several states are presently suing Columbia Research for its alleged fraudulent business practices. In the case of New Jersey, its state Division of Consumer Affairs has filed a suit to stop operations by Columbia Research and is trying to force the company to refund "processing" fees to at least a dozen New Jersey consumers who sent in money but never received gifts, as promised. The suit also charges the computer letter fails to adequately disclose that the vacation package does not include the cost of transportation, that extra charges are imposed if a vacation is taken during a peak season, and that reservations are subject to the availability of rooms. Although the disclosures are made in the mail solicitations, the New Jersey office says the disclosures are "inconspicuous."

OECD Consumer Policy Committee delegate

Charles R. Cavagnaro, **Office of Consumer Affairs'** (OCA) Director of International and Field Operations, was selected to head the 3-man US delegation to the recent meeting in Paris of the Consumer Policy Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). OECD, in which the US participates, is an organization of 23 member nations based in Paris to provide a forum for discussion and development of economic policy and programs. The Consumer Policy Committee has concentrated its work in the fields of product labeling and safety, consumer credit and marketing practices and general consumer policy.

Energy saving tips

Energy Dept. has issued an updated version of its publication *Tips for Energy Savers*. The 46-page booklet offers simple straightforward advice on hundreds of practical steps consumers can take to save money and energy.

Booklet includes both conservation tips and projections of energy savings. Here are a few suggestions:

- If you are planning to buy a gas oven or range, look for one with an automatic (electronic) ignition system instead of pilot lights. You'll save up to 47% on gas used by the appliance.
- Check the temperature on your water heater. Most water heaters are set at 140 degrees F or higher, but you may not need water that hot unless you have a dishwasher. A setting of 120 degrees F is sufficient for most families. A reduction from 140 degrees (medium) to 120 degrees (low) can save more than 18% of the energy needed to heat your family's water.
- Have your oil furnace serviced at least once a year, preferably during the summer to take advantage of off-season rates. This precaution could save up to 10% of the energy used to heat your home.
- Lower your thermostat. If every household in the US lowered its average daily temperature by 6 degrees, we would save more than 570,000 barrels of oil per day, or about 3.5% of current oil imports.
- Observe the 55 mile per hour (mph) speed limit. Most cars get about 20% more miles per gallon on the highway at 55 mph than at 70 mph.
- Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows. Cost of materials for the average house (12 windows and 2 doors) is about \$25. If every gas-heated home was properly caulked and weatherstripped, we'd save enough natural gas each year to heat about 4 million homes.

For a free copy of *Tips for Energy Savers* write Energy Conservation Now, Dept. 606F, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Bulk orders for *Tips* may be placed by writing to *Tips for Energy Savers*, Energy Dept., Washington, DC 20585.

A Spanish version of this publication is also available by writing to the above.

MORE TIPS

Energy Dept. periodically releases additional energy saving tips. Here are more ideas:

- When drying clothes, remove clothes needing ironing from the dryer while they are still slightly damp. You'll waste energy to dry them completely if they have to be dampened again for ironing.
- Add an on-off switch to the line on "instant-on" television sets, or disconnect them when they're not in use. Even when the screen is dark, these sets, especially the tube types, use energy.
- Keep liquids in frost-free refrigerators covered to cut down on moisture buildup.
- Turn off burners on electric ranges several minutes before the end of the proper cooking period. The heating element will stay hot and your food will finish cooking without using additional energy.
- When baking, avoid peeking in the oven. A 20% energy loss occurs each time you open the oven door. This not only wastes energy—it increases baking time as well.
- Let leftovers cool before putting them in the refrigerator. Putting hot foods in the refrigerator makes the unit work harder to cool the air inside the compartment—and wastes energy.
- Flush the sediment out of your hot water tank once a month by draining several buckets of water from the faucet at the bottom of the tank. If the sediment builds up it can prevent the water from heating properly.

Recent recall wrapup

• **CARS—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** has announced the recall of some 40,000 1975 Volvos because of the possibility of throttle problems which could lead to the inability to control vehicle speed. Recall involves 1975 Volvo model 240's with B20F engines. Problems can lead to an unintended increase in engine speed. If this should happen NHTSA says drivers should turn the ignition key to the "off" position (not "lock" position) and pull off the road. A related problem can lead to the throttle cable becoming stuck at any speed. This condition may be noticed by slower than normal movement of the accelerator pedal or the need to apply more pedal pressure. If these symptoms are noticed, seek a dealer's help immediately. Manufacturer is sending recall notices to owners of affected cars.

• Chrysler has recalled more than one million 1975 through 1977 Valiants, Darts, Aspens, and Volares with 318 cubic inch V-8 and 225 cubic inch 6-cylinder engines for correction of a stalling problem. The stalling is due either to a carburetor defect arising from the use of certain unleaded gasolines or with the emission control system. **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** previously had asked Chrysler to undertake the recall after an investigation showed the stalling to be hazardous. NHTSA has received some 1,000 consumer complaints about the stalling including reports of more than 50 accidents. Chrysler said it has received some 4,500 consumer letters on the problem.

• **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** has announced the recall of 1.2 million 1976 Plymouth Volares, 1977 Dodge Aspens, Diplomats and 1978 Chrysler LeBarons because of faulty hood latches. Defect can be remedied by adjusting the hood catch mechanism. Chrysler will be sending out recall letters to owners of affected vehicles as soon as possible.

• An estimated 22,000 1978 Plymouth Volares and Furies; Dodge Aspens, Monacos, Chargers and Diplomats; and Chrysler Cordobas and LeBarons all with tilt-steering columns are being recalled for correction of a problem that could result in the loss of steer-

ing. Chrysler estimates that 2% of these cars may have steering shafts that contain a coupling pin that could fall out. The auto maker is installing a cotter pin in these cars to insure that the coupling pin remains in place.

• **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** has announced the recall of an estimated 783,000 Chrysler cars for correction of a problem that could result in the complete loss of electrical power and resulting loss of engine power, lights and accessories and could cause drivers to lose control of their cars. Recall involves 1972 and 1973 models of Plymouth Fury, Dodge Polara and Monaco Chrysler cars. Recall correction requires repair of the engine compartment power feed circuit wire. Owners of affected vehicles should be receiving recall notices from Chrysler.

• Some 6,000 1978 Ford Fiestas are being recalled because of improperly located resistor wires on air conditioners which may cause fires under the instrument panel. Owners of air conditioned Fiestas should not use air conditioners until recall corrections are made. **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** is urging owners to return cars to dealers as soon as they receive recall notices from Ford.

• Some 2,000 Mazda rotary engine cars are being recalled for correction of a carburetor problem that could result in fuel leakage and engine compartment fires according to **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)**. NHTSA says the recall involves 1976 model Mazda RX-3 sedans, coupes and station wagons equipped with manual transmissions. The manufacturer, Toyo Kogyo Co., Ltd. of Japan, said the problem is caused by the loosening of a carburetor plug which allows fuel to drop on hot engine components. Correction of the problem involves use of a sealant on the plug to prevent it from coming loose. Affected car owners should have received recall notices in December.

• **CARS AND LIGHT TRUCKS—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** has announced the recall of some 40,000 Ford cars and trucks with manual steering because of a problem that can require increased steering

effort accompanied by a popping or grinding noise. Included in the recall are 1977 Mavericks, Comets, Granadas and Monarchs and 1977 light truck models F 100-150-250-350, all with manual steering, and which were produced between May 1, 1977 and July 31, 1977. Ford is notifying owners of these vehicles. Recall involves replacing steering gear assemblies that were manufactured in May 1977.

• **TRUCKS — National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** has announced the recall of some 24,000 Dodge 1977 and 1978 club cab light trucks for correction of a problem that could result in fuel leakage. Recall involves trucks made from August 1976 through August 1977. Fuel tubes on these trucks may have been improperly routed so they wear away and leak fuel. Manufacturer is sending recall notices to owners. Problem can be corrected by rerouting fuel tubes and replacing damaged sections of the tubes.

• Some 7,400 Mack trucks are being recalled for inspection and repair of the rear axle housing. **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** has announced. Recall involves certain Mack models equipped with SWTL56, SW56 and SW57 bogies (rear tandem wheels) which were manufactured between May 5, 1977 and Oct. 18, 1977. Faulty welds in the units may fail leading to misalignment of the rear wheels with a possible loss of vehicle control. NHTSA said axle separation could occur without warning. Manufacturer is voluntarily recalling the following models: DM, F, HHM, MB, RD, RM, U, RL, RS, WL and WS. Owners will be notified of the recall. Until corrections are made NHTSA says that owners should check the welds holding the rear axle spring insulator bracket to the axle housing for cracks. If cracks appear repairs should be made immediately.

• **MOTORCYCLES — National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** and Honda Motor Co. have announced the recall of about 1.4 million 1974, 1975 and 1976 Honda motorcycles because of defective fuel tank caps which can open in the event of a fall and possibly cause a fire. Recall applies to

1974 models CB550 and CB750; 1975 models CB500 and CB500T; and 1976 models CL200, CB200, CB200T, SL350, CB350F, CB350, CL350, CL360, CB360T, CB360, CB360G, CB400F, CB450. Manufacturer will notify owners of recalled bikes as soon as parts are available.

• **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS — Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** and Le Gran Imports, Long Beach, CA have announced the recall of certain Christmas light replacement bulbs which were made in Taiwan. CPSC found that some of the bulbs could create a shock or fire hazard when electric current is first applied because of a thin strand of wire about 1/4 inch in length which may protrude from the side or base of the bulb. Consumers are advised to inspect these bulbs to see if a wire is present. Defective bulbs should be returned for refund or exchange. Bulb packages were identified as "Item No. LC-7005P size 7 1/2," along with the words "Christmas Lamps," and "Le Gran Imports." Bulbs were sold 5 to a package. CPSC and Le Gran warn that other distributors may have imported these same bulbs from Taiwan and may be selling them under different names. Consumers are cautioned to check all such replacement bulbs before installing them in decorative lighting fixtures.

• **LIVER PATE—Agriculture Dept.** has announced the recall of French liver pate marked with foreign establishment numbers "ETS-24-02C" and "24-02D." Agriculture said tests on these products showed signs of food poisoning bacteria and advised consumers to return liver paste products with the above numbers to the place of purchase. Products were sold under different names including "Terrine De Foie Gras with Truffles," "Bloc De Foie Gras with Truffles," "Roll Goose Liver Pate with Truffles," "Perigord Liver Pate with Truffles," "Roll of Truffled Goose Liver Paste," "Smoked Goose Pate," "Whole Natural Foie Gras," "Goose Breast Perigord Style," "Goose Fat," "Confit De Oie," "Graisie De Oie," "Whole Natural Foie Gras with Truffles," and "Pate with Perigord Truffles 1%."

S-p-r-e-a-d-i-n-g the word

National Consumers League (NCL), the oldest national consumer organization in the US, is teaching a program on the "Assertive Consumer: Credit and Warranties" in 4 locations around the country. **Office of Education's (OE) Office of Consumers' Education** has awarded NCL a \$121,000 grant to conduct the 4-day program in California, New Jersey, New York and Ohio. Announced Dec. 26, 1977, it is too late for applicants—who must be associated with a public interest organization—to participate in the first round of courses in New Jersey and Ohio, but not too late to apply for the course in Santa Clara County, CA (Feb. 7) or the Bedford-Stuyvesant area in Brooklyn, NY (Feb. 21). All the courses will be re-taught in all 4 areas through May. For more information write or call Assertive Consumer Project Director Lynn Jordan, National Consumers League, 1028 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036; telephone 202-293-1203.

One of the few organizations which develop indices of the votes of Federal legislators that include votes on significant consumer issues is Public Citizen Congress Watch, established by consumer advocate Ralph Nader. The *1977 Public Citizen Congressional Voting Index*, covering votes of the 95th Congress from January to November 1977, is now available at \$2.00 per copy from Public Citizen Congress Watch, 133 C Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003.

FTC screens electronic video games

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has concluded that "reasonable use" of electronic video games should not damage television screens but says eventually most electronic video games can produce some level of a permanent pattern on the screens of most television sets, "although the image will be less visible when the set is turned on." FTC says that black and white TVs are most susceptible to this imprinting than color sets. These conclusions were based on recent **National Bureau of Standards (NBS)** tests.

The report, prepared for FTC, says few consumers have complained of any imprint problems with TV video games and that most reports come from dealers who use video games continuously in showroom sets. However, FTC warns that video games can leave some degree of permanent pattern on TV screens. "Where imprinting occurs," FTC says, "stationary details of a game's image (field outline, net, score, etc.) remain on the screen."

The extent of imprinting depends on a number of factors, according to FTC, including: (1) brightness of the game's image when in use, (2) the type of TV (black and white or color) and (3) how long the game is in use.

Results of the NBS study showed that:

- Some video games with high brightness settings caused imprintation of black and white sets after 100-200 hours of use.

- Video games used on color sets did not create significant problems. High brightness games used on color sets needed more than 350 hours of use to leave patterns. Low brightness games took longer to leave imprintation.

- Video games with low brightness signals, constantly changing brightness, or automatic shut-off features significantly reduce imprinting.

To avoid TV imprint problems with video games FTC says:

- Avoid games and program cartridges that have high brightness levels. Compare models by adjusting the brightness controls on the sets being used for display. If the game's image remains bright when the brightness control is turned down, the game probably is generating high brightness levels.

- Look for games with constantly changing brightness levels when the game is left on but not being played.

- Adjust your set's controls for a normal TV picture and then switch on the game. Game picture will then have low brightness whites or light colors and gray rather than black tones.

- Shut the game off when not in use.

CONSUMER NEWS is published the 1st and 15th of each month by the Office of Consumer Affairs, Health, Education and Welfare Dept., to report Federal Government programs for consumers. Use of funds for printing this publication through Sept. 30, 1979, approved by Office of Management and Budget. Authorization to reproduce any or all items is granted. Editorial address is CONSUMER NEWS, Office of Consumer Affairs, Health, Education and Welfare Dept., 621 Reporters Bldg., Washington, DC 20201; Marion Q. Ciaccio, Managing Editor (202-755-8830). Sold by consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009; subscription \$6 a year, payable to "Supt. of Documents." Send address change to Supt. of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

US GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1977-215/9
DHEW PUBLICATION NO. (OS) 77-108

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF H.E.W.
391

First Class



CNEW SERIA300S ISSDUE016R 1
SERIALS PROCESSING
XEROX/UNIV MICROFILMS
300 N ZEEB RD.
ANN ARBOR MI 48106

Consumer News: Jan. 15, 1978